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CORRESPONDENCE MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 3, 2003
TO: Group Insurance Board
FROM: Vicki Poole, Director of Legislation and Planning
SUBJECT: Legislative Update

The following is an update of bills introduced during the 2003 legislative session that have the potential to impact the operations of the Group Insurance Board (GIB). Actions taken are listed in *italics* following a description of each bill.

AB 304 makes several changes to health insurance plans and other benefits offered to local government employees. Specifically related to the GIB, it requires the GIB to prepare a report on offering group health insurance plans at different cost levels to local government employers and employees, requires the GIB to offer for purchase long-term care insurance policies to employees of local governments, and convenes a task force to conduct a feasibility study on forming a state pool for the bulk purchasing of prescription drugs.

Introduced by Rep. McCormick. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Public hearing held.

AB 312 allows individuals not otherwise eligible for health care coverage under a GIB plan to receive coverage under any health care coverage plan offered to State employees by paying to the Department of Employee Trust Funds the cost of premiums.

Introduced by Rep. Ainsworth. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Public hearing held.

AB 313 (Same as SB 202) allows the purchase of health care coverage through the GIB by individuals who are engaged in the business of farming.

Introduced by Rep. Towns. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Public hearing held.

AB 355 creates a prescription drug assistance program to help people without health insurance drug coverage purchase prescription drugs at prices established by the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) after negotiations with manufacturers. Requires DHFS to create two preferred drug lists. One for State supported health assistance programs and one for health care plans provided to government employees and private sector employees.

Introduced by Rep. Underheim. Referred to Committee on Health. Public hearing held.

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AB 362 provides health insurance coverage of prescription medication for the treatment of diabetes.

Introduced by Rep. Johnsrud. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Public hearing held. Passed by committee 9-5.

AB 364 creates required coverage of off-label drugs for the treatment of cancer.

Introduced by Rep. Vrakas. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Public hearing held.

AB 579 requires health care plans to cover the cost of vaccinations against small pox, anthrax, and any other disease or biological malfunction that is caused by a biological agent having the potential for use in terrorist attacks.

Introduced by Rep. Schneider. Referred to Committee on Insurance.

SB 71 covers treatment of prescription drug costs, diagnostic testing, and payments under mandated insurance coverage of treatment for nervous and mental disorders and alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) problems.

Introduced by Joint Legislative Council. Referred to Committee on Health, Children, Families, Aging and Long Term Care. Public hearing held. Passed by committee 8-1.

SB 72 increases limits for insurance coverage of nervous or mental health disorders or AODA problems to account for increases in inflation.

Introduced by Joint Legislative Council. Referred to Committee on Health, Children, Families, Aging and Long Term Care. Public hearing held. Passed by committee 5-4.

SB 202 (Same as AB 313) allows the purchase of health care coverage through the Group Insurance Board for individuals who are engaged in the business of farming.

Introduced by Sen. Leibham. Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Financial Institutions and Insurance. Pubic hearing held. Passed unanimously by committee. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.

SB 278 creates a special committee, called the Commission on Municipal Employer Health Care Coverage Costs (MEHCC) to study the feasibility of allowing all local government and school district employers to provide their employees with health insurance coverage under the health care coverage plan for State employees that is administered by the GIB and must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the legislature no later than December 31, 2004.

Introduced by Sen. Plale. Referred to the Joint Committee on Finance.